



Inside This Issue:

- **Advocating Change Day Reminder**
- **The "Fun" in Funnel**
- **Issue Updates**
 - **Health Care Reform Advances**
 - **Mental Health Parity Stalls**
 - **MH/DS Funding Discussions Continue**
- **State Economy Stays Strong**
- **Caucus Report: Voter Registrations Grow**
- **Take Action! Public Forums List**
- **Important Bills**
 - **Funnel Survivors**

ADVOCATING CHANGE DAY

Join us at Advocating Change Day 2008 on April 9 and help us fill the rotunda!

You can now register by calling toll-free (866/432-2846 or 866/432-2847 TTY/TDD), by emailing (info@idaction.org), or online at www.idaction.org/change_day.html.

The deadline for early registration (which qualifies you for a prize) is March 10.

THE 'FUN' IN FUNNEL

If you asked anyone at the Capitol this week how their week was going, they would most likely reply "Just putting the 'fun' back in funnel." Many activists and legislators are breathing sighs of relief this weekend,

as the first of two bill-action deadlines (called funnels) passes.

Deadlines in the legislature are called "funnels" because they narrow the number of bills eligible for debate. Much like a funnel, lots of stuff is poured into the top, but only a small amount comes out the bottom. Today (Friday, March 7) marks the end of the first funnel deadline – the day all bills must be voted out of their assigned committee. Bills that were not voted on by today are dead, and cannot be brought up for discussion again this year.

About half of the bills introduced this year will fail to meet the funnel deadline.

- We have been tracking 83 bills for our *infoNET* readers – and that list just narrowed to 44 this week. This means about 46% of the bills we have been watching for you are no longer eligible for discussion – and are "dead" for the year.
- So far this year, 1475 bills have been introduced to date. Only about 800 are now eligible for debate.
- Bills that spend money (Appropriations), reform government (Government Oversight), involve taxes (Ways & Means), or are sponsored by legislative leaders are all funnel-proof and remain eligible for consideration the entire session. They never die.

By the second deadline (March 28), even more bills will die in the funnel. By the time the Legislature finishes its work in April, only about 8% of the bills introduced will make it to the Governor's desk.

Discouraged now? Don't be! The odds of your issue becoming law can be hugely improved by a little work on your part. The key difference is activism – lobbyists can do a lot, but they can't do it all, and they can't do it as quickly as a motivated and organized group of people.

Imagine you are a legislator. You are sitting in your chair sifting through 1,475 bills and thousands of amendments. You can throw away half – but which half do you toss?

You open your email, and find a bunch of emails on a bill with personal stories from the people you represent. You open up your local newspaper and see several people have written letters to the editor about that bill. You attend your local public forum over the weekend and a few families show up, politely introduce themselves and talk about the very same issue. You check your voice mail and hear five more calls on the topic. And your mailbox has a few more postcards sent by people in your district.

Now compare that to another bill that a bunch of lobbyists are telling you is important, that is something the people in your district need, but you've never heard anyone talk about it. Which issue would you spend your time on?

So what can you do? If your issue is alive and well after the funnel (or is about money), try one or more of these advocacy activities:

- **Call your legislators at the Capitol during the week (Monday-Thursday).** Senators can be called at 515-281-3371. Representatives can be called at 515-281-3221.
- **E-mail your legislators.** Generally, your legislator's email is their first and last name (Sen. Amanda Ragan would be Amanda.Ragan@legis.state.ia.us). Your legislator's email can be found here: www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx.
- **Attend a local legislative forum.** A list of these meetings is available on our website at: www.infonetiowa.com/advocate/local_forums.php. They are open to the public and legislators hold them so they have a chance to hear what is on the minds of the people they are elected to represent. You don't have to talk, but we encourage you to. This is a very effective way to get your issue in front of your elected officials.
- **Write a letter to the editor.** Doing this not only educates your legislators (because they read these letters to the editor) – it also educates others in your community. You do not talk to your

legislators directly in these letters; you are simply stating your opinion or thoughts about an issue publicly in the paper, with hopes of swaying public opinion, including the opinions of your legislators.

- **Write your legislators at the Capitol.** The good old tried and true letter still works. Postcards are great too. We encourage you to write these letters out by hand if possible, because it shows you have taken the time to make your contact with legislators personal. Write your legislators at the following address:

State Senate (or House of Representatives)
State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

- **If your issue is addressed in a bill, make sure you include a bill number** and tell your legislator (politely please) what you would like them to do (please support, please oppose, etc).
- **Let us know how it goes – we'd love to write about your success or your efforts in *infoNET*.** Send it to us at the following address or email (info@idaction.org):

infoNET
c/o ID Action
P.O. Box 71369
Des Moines, Iowa 50325

So what do you do if your issue is addressed in a bill that died in the funnel and is no longer able to be discussed – *what can you do?*

- There are always ways to get around the funnel deadlines. Your legislators can sponsor an amendment to another bill to address your issue, or they can ask their leaders to sponsor a bill.
- If you would like to "revive" a dead bill – call, write, email, or show up at a public forum and ask your legislators to find a way to amend another bill to address your issue.

ISSUE UPDATES

HEALTH CARE REFORM ADVANCES

Just because legislators are members of the same political party does not mean they all agree, all the time. That is definitely the case when it comes to the legislators working on the health care reform package.

Despite having worked together all summer and fall, legislators in the House and Senate have parted ways, but they are not far apart in their efforts to make sure all Iowa families have access to health insurance that is affordable and comprehensive, and gives them access to the services they need, when they need them.

The Senate Democrats are working on a proposal ([SSB 3140](#)) that lays the groundwork for health care reform, and sets a schedule to implement those reforms. This includes a requirement that parents insure their children either through Medicaid or the state's affordable *hawk-i* program for low and moderate income families, by buying private health insurance, or through a new program that would cost you no more than 2% of your family's income per child (but never more than 6.5% total). This would start in 2011.

All children and Iowans on state-funded programs like Medicaid or IowaCare would be required to eventually have a medical home. This means that instead of an insurance company deciding when something is needed, primary care providers would work with their patients to make sure chronic conditions are managed, patients are better educated about their medical conditions and understand the choices they have, and access to specialists and other health care providers is available when needed.

The idea behind a "medical home" is to put the patient back in charge of their care, and make sure there is a health care professional to help coordinate that care. Patient and provider satisfaction are at the heart of this concept. The Senate reform plan also expands the capacity of the Department of Public Health in order to plan, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve the health care reform proposals. There are new bureaus and new commissions, all of which cost more money.

The Governor, House Democrats, and many House Republicans are working together on a scaled back version of the Senate proposal ([HF 2539](#)). It has many of the same components (medical home, electronic medical records, strategies to cover kids) - but it does not go as far. It uses the Department of Public Health's current structure and adds a few advisory groups to help with implementation.

It does not include a mandate for people to buy health insurance. It also does not create a medical home commission as the Senate version does. Instead, the

House version establishes a Medical Home Advisory Council that includes a representative of the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council.

Both proposals end the practice that allows insurance companies to limit coverage for pre-existing conditions. Beginning July 1, 2008, no insurance companies may exclude pre-existing conditions when someone is buying health insurance from them.

Both bills are out of committee and are considered "works in progress." You can read details of the bills in our bill list at the end of this update. Additional information about the bills will be posted on the *Issues & Policy Briefs* section of the *infoNET* website: www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

MIXED NEWS ON MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

Mental health parity means ending the insurance discrimination against mental illness. Right now, insurance companies are only required to pay for treatment of biologically based diseases, like schizophrenia. They are not required to pay for non-biologically based diseases like eating disorders or PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

- **Bills that would have expanded Iowa's biologically based parity laws to all mental illnesses and substance abuse died in the funnel.**
- **The House Veterans Affairs Committee unanimously passed out a bill ([HF 2033](#)) that will require insurance plans pay for mental health & substance abuse treatment for veterans.** It includes any recognized mental illness, not just those that are biologically based. Rep. Ray Zirkelbach, the Monticello legislator who sponsored the bill, returned to the Legislature this year after spending more than two years in Iraq.
- **Opponents of parity always say parity legislation will cause big jumps in insurance premiums.** Interestingly, the estimated impact of the veteran's parity bill came in at only .07% increase in premiums for private insurance plans. Hard to argue people would not want to pay this "price of freedom," said Rep. Zirkelbach.
- **There is hope on the federal side as well.** A federal parity bill is moving through Congress,

having passed the US House of Representatives for the first time. The U.S. Senate passed a narrower version of the bill.

- **The fate of the federal parity bill is all in the family now.** That is, the Kennedy family. The lead negotiator for the U.S. Senate is Sen. Edward (Ted) Kennedy; the lead negotiator for the U.S. House is his son Rep. Patrick Kennedy.
- **If Congress passes a law saying insurance plans will have to treat mental illness (and substance abuse) as they would a physical illness, there may be no need for state legislation.**
- More information on this will be posted online: www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/issues_and_policy_briefs.php.

MH/DS FUNDING DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

The devil is in the details – something you hear a lot up at the Capitol. Well, the devil *really is* in the details when it comes to funding for mental health and disability services (MH/DS). And there are an awful lot of details.

The group of legislators and advocates working on the funding formula for the county-managed MH/DS service system continues to struggle to move forward. But this hardy group has vowed to press on and find a solution, even though new money will be difficult, if not impossible, to find this next year. A number of options have been presented, but there is debate on whether they really get to the root of the problem.

Options discussed include having the state take over the costs of court-ordered placements that counties currently pay (about \$9.6 million each year) or having the state take over the growth in the county share of Medicaid services to persons with mental retardation (about \$8 million each year).

THE PROBLEM

There is not enough money to pay for the services people need either at the state level (waiver services) or at the local level (county-based programs). There are people on waiting lists for state waivers, some waiting for a year or more. There are people on waiting lists for services at the county level and some people are seeing or will see their services eliminated or reduced because of funding shortage.

Several policy issues factor into this discussion:

- **Not all counties pay for the same things.** Counties are required to provide a minimum level of services. Lawmakers set that bar pretty darn low many years ago, and it's time it was brought up to meet the needs of today's consumers and reflect the services available now. But it is important that the resources follow the requirements (more services = more money).
- **The state doesn't pay for the same things either.** You have access to different services depending on the waiver you are on and your disability. If you want to equalize services across waivers, and for all disabilities, more money is needed.
- **Having different rules for different services spells confusion for consumers.** While the formula to distribute the money is complicated, a complicated formula can be fair (like Iowa's school aid formula). But the formula is not what concerns consumers. Consumers do not care about how the money is distributed, only that there is enough to go around. Right now, there is not enough, so the formula keeps slicing up an ever-shrinking pie (when what you need is a bigger pie).
- **Property tax levies are frozen – most counties can't raise more money to pay for services.** The only ways to get more money into the system are to unfreeze the levies, or put more state money into the system.
- **State funding is in high demand – finding more state dollars is just as challenging.** Roads and bridges around the state are in need of repair, and could pose dangers to drivers. They estimate needing more than \$200 million annually to keep up. The state needs to build another prison. Legislators want to reform Iowa's health care system. Teachers want to be paid more, and so do nurses. The children's mental health system desperately needs an overhaul, and parents of children with autism make a really good case for access to services. Persons with brain injury make a good case too. We could go on and on, but the sad fact is there is simply not enough money to go around.

- **What you think about the current system may very well depend on where you live.**

Some people wonder why the state is trying to reform a system that works; others wonder what is taking so long.

- **Who's at fault?** It doesn't matter who is to blame – everyone is, no one is, it really doesn't matter. As one advocate said, move on and find a solution. Consumer perspectives get lost in this discussion between providers, counties, legislators, and state agencies. *What is important is serving the consumer – and your voices need to be heard.*

THE SOLUTION

There are solutions, but all involve money. No matter who runs the show, they will need more money. There is no additional money at the state level, and raising local taxes to pay for it may not be a realistic option for legislators. Without first addressing the need for additional resources, real system improvement will be challenging.

We tell you this not to discourage – but to encourage. Legislators are hearing constantly from lobbyists at the Capitol, but they are not always hearing directly from consumers. That is why you need to be your own lobbyist.

- **Let your legislators know what is important to you** – and what you want to see in the system.
- **Contact your state senator** at 515-281-3371 or by writing him/her at the State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.
- **Contact your state representative** at 515-281-3221 or by writing him/her at the State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.
- **What would your perfect system look like?** Explain what is happening now, if you have everything you need, and what you are missing.

As William Arthur Ward once said, "The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects to change it; the realist adjusts the sails."

Legislators may not realistically be able to change the wind, and complaining about it really doesn't help, but they very well may be able to adjust it so we can head in the general direction of reform.

STATE ECONOMY STAYS STRONG

While there might not be a lot of money to spend this year, there is good news in the forecast. Legislators found out last week that state revenues are growing at 11%, not the 2% growth rate they were expecting.

By law, legislators must spend only 99% of what they take in each year in revenues. The remaining 1% goes into a saving fund for a "rainy day." They base their budgets by law on the January revenue estimates, which were 2%. Apparently, the recession has not hit Iowa yet, because March estimates show 11% growth in estimates (or about \$450 million more than expected).

Legislators could spend this money, but they typically do not. Legislators are also mindful that they have \$600 million in the state's "rainy day" fund, and that the rest of the nation's economy is slowing down quickly.

CAUCUS VOTER REGISTRATIONS GROW

Anyone attending a caucus on January 3 to participate in the process of selecting our next President will tell you that there were a lot of people there, and that many of those people had never attended a caucus, were not registered to vote, or were switching parties.

Yesterday, Iowa's Secretary of State Michael Mauro confirmed what many of us guessed. While 22,000 new voters attended their caucus, nearly 70,000 others changed parties.

Democrats were the big winners of this year's caucus, gaining 60,000 new members. Republicans increased their membership by about 7,600 people. Here is a breakdown of Iowa's voting population as of March 1:

- 701,285 registered Democrats
- 615,576 registered Republicans
- 761,201 not affiliated with a party

The number of no-party voters (sometimes called "independents") decreased by about 49,000. "It was apparent from the media reports and the crowded caucus locations that this was going to be a historic event for all Iowans," Mauro said in a statement. "These registration numbers prove that the reports we were all hearing weren't just hype, but a reflection of a momentous event."

Secretary of State Michael Mauro is elected by Iowans, and is the state's top voting and elections official.

Want to meet Secretary of State Michael Mauro?

He will be one of our keynote speakers at Advocating Change Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, April 9.

TAKE ACTION! PUBLIC FORUMS LIST

Legislators attend legislative forums that are open to the public on weekends, when they are back in their hometowns. These forums are excellent times to talk to your legislators and ask questions.

Here is a list of the upcoming forums (next two weeks). A complete list of these forums is online at: www.infonetiowa.com.

Friday, March 14, 2008

Noon - KEOKUK

Hawkeye Restaurant, 105 N. Park Drive
Rep. Phil Wise

Saturday, March 15, 2008

All Day - Democratic County Conventions

8:30 a.m. – AMES

Ames City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Story County Area Legislators

9:00-10:30 – COUNCIL BLUFFS

Council Bluffs Public Library, 400 Willow Avenue
Pottawattamie County Area Legislators

9:00 a.m. – HAWARDEN

Hawarden City Hall, 1150 Central Avenue
Rep. Chuck Soderberg & Sen. Dave Mulder

9:00 a.m. – NEWTON

HyVee Club Room, 1st Avenue E.
Sen. Dennis Black

9:30 a.m. – CEDAR FALLS

AEA 267 Building, 3712 Cedar Heights Drive
Black Hawk County Area Legislators

9:30 a.m. – CLERMONT

Clermont Public Library, 503 Larrabee
Sen. Bill Heckroth & Sen. Brian Schoenjahn

9:30 a.m. - OELWEIN

Luigi's Restaurant, 1020 S. Frederick
Rep. Andrew Wenthe

10:00 a.m. - ANITA

New Location! Anita Wellness Center
Sen. Nancy Boettger

10:00 a.m. – BELLE PLAINE

Belle Plaine Community Center, 805 11th Street
Rep. Dawn Pettengill

10:00 a.m. - CARROLL

Time & Place TBD
Sen. Steve Kettering & Rep. Rod Roberts

10:00 a.m. - DENISON

Cronk's Café, 812 4th Avenue S.
Sen. Jim Seymour & Rep. Clarence Hoffman

10:00-11:30 - JOHNSTON

Johnston Public Library, 6700 Merle Hay Road
Rep. Walt Tomenga & Sen. Larry Noble

10:00 a.m. – MUSCATINE "Hunters & Fishers Forum"

Muscatine County Environmental Learning Center
Rep. Nathan Reichert

10:00 a.m. – SIOUX CITY

Wilbur Aalfs Library, 529 Pierce
Woodbury County legislators

10:00-12:00 - WASHINGTON

Washington County Court House, 222 W. Main
Sen. Becky Schmitz

10:00 a.m. – WOODWARD

Woodward Senior Center, 218 S. Main
Sen. Jerry Behn & Rep. Ralph Watts

10:30 a.m. – AKRON

New Location! Akron Library, 350 Reed Street
Rep. Chuck Soderberg & Sen. Dave Mulder

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. - BELMOND

Belmond Public Library, 440 E. Main
Sen. Rich Olive & others

10:30 a.m. – CEDAR RAPIDS

Mercy Medical Center, 701 10th Street SE
Linn County Legislators

Noon – WESTFIELD

New Location! Westfield City Hall, 223 Union Street
Rep. Chuck Soderberg & Sen. Dave Mulder

1:30 p.m. - CLARION

Clarion Public Library, 302 N. Main
Sen. Rich Olive & others

Saturday, March 22, 2008

8:00 a.m. – FORT DODGE

Iowa Central Community College, Education Bldg,
Rooms 108 & 110, Highway 169 & Avenue O
*Sen. Daryl Beall, Sen. Jack Kibbie, Sen. Rich Olive,
Rep. McKinley Bailey & Others*

8:15 a.m. – ROCK RAPIDS

Forster Community Building, 404 1st Avenue
Rep. Dwayne Alons & Sen. Dave Mulder

8:30 a.m. - OSKALOOSA

Smokey Row, 109 S. Market
Rep. Eric Palmer

NEW! 9:00 a.m. - EMMETSBURG

Emmetsburg City Hall, 2021 Main Street
Rep. Marcella Frevert

9:00 a.m. – OXFORD JUNCTION

Schakey's Place, 317 First Avenue North
Sen. Tom Hancock

9:00 a.m. - WAUKEE

Wauke City Hall, 230 Highway 6
Sen. Jerry Behn & Rep. Ralph Watts

NEW! 10:00 a.m. – SIOUX CENTER

Pizza Ranch, 251 N. Main Street
Sen. Dave Mulder & Rep. Dwayne Alons

10:30 a.m. – SIGOURNEY

Keokuk County Courthouse, 101 S. Main
Rep. Betty DeBoef

10:30 a.m. – WEBSTER CITY

Webster City Council Chambers, 400 Second Street
Sen. Rich Olive & Rep. McKinley Bailey

NEW! 11:00 a.m. – CEDAR RAPIDS

Reynaldos, 475 Northland Ave. NE
Rep. Art Staed

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. – JEFFERSON

Pizza Ranch, 206 N. Wilson Avenue
Sen. Daryl Beall

IMPORTANT BILLS

THE FUNNEL SURVIVORS

Bills Signed Into Law

SF 2054 - MH/MR/DD Funding (Late-Filing Counties)

- Counties are required by law to report on how they spent their MH/MR/DD funds by December 1 each year. This bill allows a county (Clayton County) that filed their reports by March 15, 2008 to still be eligible for MH/MR/DD allowed growth. Effective 2/4/2008.

SF 2101 - Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program

Transfer - Moves the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program from the Iowa Finance Authority to the Iowa Department of Education. Two years ago it was moved from the Department of Economic Development to the Iowa Finance Authority. This program helps people with disabilities start, maintain, and expand their own business. Effective 7/1/2008.

House Bills

HF 2033 - Mental Health Parity/Veterans - Requires all health insurance plans pay for the treatment of mental illness (any mental illness) and substance abuse for veterans, starting January 1, 2009. Prohibits lifetime limits and copayments/deductibles more than required for medical care, and guarantees a minimum of 30 inpatient and 52 outpatient visits annually. *Status: House Floor;*
Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Zirkelbach (Floor Manager)

HF 2128 - Health Insurance Mandates Commission - Creates a State Health Insurance Mandates Commission that will look at any bill that requires insurance plans to cover a service or illness, and evaluate its fiscal impact and its societal impact. A legislative committee is not allowed to pass any mandate bill until the commission finishes its work (which can take up to 45 days). Bills referred to this commission would be funnel-proof (meaning they do not have to meet deadlines during session and will be alive for the entire session). In addition, any current legislation including a health insurance mandate would be immediately sent to the commission at the close of session for consideration (so there are recommendations immediately when session begins in 2009). Health insurance mandates before the legislature this year include mental health parity (requiring health insurance plans to pay for the costs of any mental illness or substance abuse treatment), prosthetic mandate (requiring insurance plans pay for prosthetics), and HPV (requiring insurance plans pay for human papilloma

virus - HPV - vaccinations which prevent cervical cancer).
Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. T. Olson (Floor Manager)

HF 2142 - Consumer Fraud/Private Cause of Action - New bill number will be assigned soon. Establishes a private cause of action for consumer fraud violations. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Palmer (Floor Manager) Amendment: 1*

HF 2155 - Medicaid Provider Rate Increase - Increases Medicaid provider rates by 3% (and appropriates \$19,934,259). Includes Magellan (mental health managed care contract). *Status: House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Foege (Chair), Gayman & Heaton*

HF 2157 & SF 2292 Civil Rights Filing Deadline - Extends the time period for filing complaints with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission from 180 to 300 days. *Status: House Floor/Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Smith (Floor Manager); Sen. Hatch (Floor Manager)*

HF 2230 - Special Hunting Licenses/Persons with Disabilities & Terminally Ill - Allows the Natural Resources Commission to issue special nonresident turkey and deer hunting licenses to persons with a severe physical disability or a person who is terminally ill. Requires a physician to sign the application, and still requires the person to pay the license fee. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Dearden (Floor Manager)*

HF 2239 - Education Technical Changes/Special Education - Makes it clear that a child who turns 21 in the middle of the school year is entitled to continue to receive special education until the end of the school year. Also, any notices sent to a child's parent after the child turns 18 must also go to the child. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Kelley (Floor Manager)*

HF 2264 - Voter Registration Deadline - Makes the deadline for voter registration 11 days before any election (currently voter registration deadlines vary between 11 days and 10 days depending on the election). Iowa still has same day voter registration, but the ballots cast after this 10 day deadline are provisional, meaning the voter must first be verified as eligible (18 years old or older, citizen, never been convicted of a felony) before the vote is counted. Effective upon enactment. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Gaskill (Floor Manager)*

HF 2294 - Individual Development Accounts - Individual Development Accounts are savings plans available to low income individuals, including persons with disabilities, to increase opportunities for self sufficiency by allowing them to save money for qualifying purchases, such as paying for educational expenses, buying a home or

starting a small business. Right now money in these accounts is tax-free, and they can be matched by the operating organizations (such as the credit unions participating). The organizations giving this match are given tax breaks for doing this. This bill makes a number of changes to these accounts - accounts may have only \$30,000 in them (lowered from \$50,000), administration of the program is moved from DHS to the Division of Community Action Agencies in the Department of Human Rights, and household income thresholds are to be determined by the Division with input from the Family Development & Self-Sufficiency (FADSS) Council. Also requires the Division to send out an RFP to select operating organizations, and gives organizations providing a match a full tax break (100% instead of 15-25%). Changes the current state match limit from \$2,000 per year to \$2,000 total. Requires the Division to work with Iowa's federal delegation to get a federal tax break on the money organizations give as match as well. Effective upon enactment. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Foege (Floor Manager)*

HF 2371 - Psychiatric Residencies at University of Iowa - Appropriates \$1.4 million to the University of Iowa to add a minimum of 14 additional psychiatric residency positions. Requires psychiatric residents in these programs practice in the state for a minimum of four years following completion of the program. Requirements for 4 of the positions funded under the bill include that the person practice at one of the state's MHIs for their four year commitment. *Status: House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Winckler (Chair), Foege & Heaton*

HF 2393 - Minority Impact Statements - Requires all applications for grants from the Iowa Departments of Public Health, Human Services or Human Rights to include a minority impact statement (written by the applicants) describing the proposal's unique impact on minority persons, reason for the proposal if there is an impact and evidence the applicant has consulted with representatives of the minority persons if there is an impact. Persons with disabilities are included in the definition of "minority." *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Ford (Floor Manager)*

HF 2407 - Accessible Parking Registration Fee - Currently, there is a \$60 annual registration fee for multi-purpose vehicles modified for persons with disabilities or used by persons in wheelchairs. This bill makes it apply to any vehicle or station wagon, not just multi-purpose vehicles (trucks, motor homes, ambulances, hearses, motorcycles, motorized bicycles are still not included). *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Dandekar (Floor Manager)*

HF 2423 - County MH/MR/DD Risk Pool - Changes the date for counties to apply for risk pool funds from January

25 to October 31, and requires the Risk Pool Board make its decisions by December 15 (instead of February 25). Requires payment to counties be by January 1, instead of June 30. These changes help struggling counties get their money faster - which may help avoid cuts in services to people with disabilities. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Heddens (Floor Manager)*

HF 2485 - Health Care Whistleblower - Protects health care worker whistleblowers (employees who report their employers for health and safety violations). This includes people providing care to persons in state institutions, nursing facilities, and hospitals. Does not protect persons who disclose information prohibited by law. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Mascher (Floor Manager)*

HF 2495 - Small Business Linked Investments Program - The bill changes the allocation of available moneys invested in the small business linked investments program. Currently, half of the moneys are available to business owners who are women, minority persons, or persons with disabilities. The bill changes the allocation of moneys available to women, minority persons, or persons with disabilities to 40 percent and allocates 10 percent to veterans. The bill also changes the net worth requirement for the program. Currently, in order to qualify for assistance, the combined net worth of all owners of a business or borrowers under the program cannot exceed \$750,000. The bill raises the limit on combined net worth to \$1 million. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Zirkelbach (Floor Manager)*

HF 2539 - Health Care Reform Bill (House Version) - Declares the legislature's intent to make health care more affordable for families and fill gaps in coverage with expanded programs, starting with children in 2010. This very long bill does this by directing the department to use information technology to develop a system that allows patients to have a portable electronic health record (one that goes with you to any doctor you wish to see), lays the groundwork to requiring children receiving Medicaid benefits have a medical and dental home by the end of 2010 (the Governor's DD Council has a seat at the Medical Home Advisory Council). The bill also requires all health insurance plans to cover a person's unmarried dependent children until the age of 25 (or as long as they remain a student). Prohibits insurance companies from excluding pre-existing conditions. Directs Department of Public Health to develop a chronic care management system to help people manage their chronic conditions, like diabetes or heart disease. Also directs the Department of Human Services to implement the Family Opportunity Act when sufficient funding is available and report on progress made on this. Finally, the bill also requires the Department of Public Health to establish a competitive grant program to energize local communities to encourage people to live healthier lifestyles and behaviors.

Requires the Department of Public Health to consult with health care professionals whose scope of practice includes end of life care to develop educational and patient-centered inform at on end of life care for terminally ill patients ("end of life care" is defined as care meeting the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and practical needs of the terminally ill and their caregivers"). *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Heddens (Floor Manager)*

HSB 637 - Background Checks/Employees of Care Facilities - New bill number to be assigned soon. Requires child and dependent adult abuse and criminal record checks for the employees of all hospitals and care facilities (nursing homes, residential care facilities, intermediate care facilities). Currently hospitals are not included in the requirement and child abuse registry checks are not required for any facility. Requires these checks be done prior to any ownership transfer. Prohibits any of these facilities from hiring a felon or founded abuse record for five years following the application. After that five-year period, DHS may evaluate that person and determine whether or not the person may be employed. Requires the employee to notify their employer within 48 hours of being convicted of a crime or a founded abuse record is made. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Abdul-Samad (Floor Manager)*

HSB 693 & SF 2265 Children/Youth Mental Health Services System - Requires DHS to create a mental health services system for children (0-18 years old) and youth (18-22 years old who met the criteria for "serious emotional disturbance" before they turned 18). Defines what is a "qualifying mental health disorder." The purpose of this new system of care is to improve access for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and youth with other qualifying mental health disorders to mental health treatment, services, and other support in the least restrictive setting possible so the children and youth can live with their families and remain in their communities. Makes DHS the lead agency for the new system. Uses competitive block grants through existing community mental health centers and other local service providers to assist in the creation of this network. Directs DHS to analyze options for leveraging additional Medicaid options, and engaging local school, child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and health care professionals. Certain services, such as school-based mental health services and the development of mental health assessment capacity based in public schools and clinical settings, are required to be supported through the block grants. The services supported may also include other services such as mobile crisis intervention services and prevention-oriented services. Requires regular reports to the MH/MR/DD/BI Commission. New bill number will be assigned to House version soon. *Status: House Floor/Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Floor Manager); Sen. Bolkcom (Floor Manager)*

HSB 727 - Mental Health Advocates - Asks the Legislature to study Iowa's system for mental health patient advocates appointed by the courts and paid for by the county of legal settlement. New bill number to be assigned. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Hunter (Floor Manager)*

HSB 729 - Dependent Adult Abuse - New bill number to be assigned. This bill was quite controversial so the committee amended it to be a "Shell Bill," meaning it only states the legislature's intent (it does nothing to change the law at this point). Legislators plan to work on ways to protect dependent adults and older Iowans who live in assisted living facilities, nursing homes and other care facilities. The bill states the Legislature's intent "to protect dependent adults in this state from abuse and to facilitate the reporting and collection of dependent adult abuse information in certain facilities." *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Hunter (Floor Manager)*

Senate Bills

SF 2023 - Utility Replacement Tax/Mental Health Risk Pool - The recent sale of the Dwayne Arnold Power Plant in Palo to a Florida company triggered a utility tax payment in the amount of \$600,000 this year (expected to double next year). Because of the way Iowa's law is written, these funds would have been used to give additional mental health property tax reductions (which does not add to the overall pot of money for services). Instead, this bill places these new funds into the MH/MR/DD Risk Pool, to help counties that have needs beyond what their local property taxes and state allowed growth permit. Counties may apply to this risk pool to avoid cuts to services or reduce waiting lists. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Foege (Floor Manager)*

SF 2089 - Absentee Ballot Applications - If this bill passes, people will be able to request an absentee ballot on any sheet of paper or on any form (right now you must use the "official" form). *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Quirmbach (Floor Manager)*

SF 2092 & HF 2152 Dependent Adult Abuse Clean-Up - Allows a person to access information on the dependent adult abuse registry if they have a signed authorization from the person. Some agencies do not have access to the registry for background checks, and employers may wish to check the background. Both will be able to do so under this legislation, as long as they have the written permission of the person being checked. *Status: House Floor/House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Abdul-Samad (Floor Manager)*

SF 2111 - Lead Blood Testing/Dental Screening Requirements - Last year, the Legislature required all parents have their children screened for lead poisoning and

been seen by a dentist before enrolling in school. Lead poisoning can result in mental retardation and developmental delays and poor dental care can lead to serious health problems. This bill cleans up this requirement and allows children to be enrolled in school even if requirements are not met. *Status: House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Rep. Gayman (Floor Manager)* Amendment: COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: *Changes the bill so that schools are also required to give the parents information about dental screening and lead screening resources in the community, including the free I-SMILE dental screening program.*

SF 2154 & HF 2327 Vertical Wheelchair Lift Definition - Updates the definition of "inclined or vertical wheelchair lift" to reflect the current American Society of Mechanical Engineers safety standards. Requires operating permits to be posted near these lifts. *Status: Senate Floor/House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Horn (Floor Manager); Rep. T. Taylor (Floor Manager)*

SF 2163 & HF 2493 Emergency Mental Health Crisis Services System - The intent of this bill is to create a statewide system to respond to persons with mental illness that are in crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The program will start off as a pilot project, with ten sites (depending on funds available, \$3 million needed to fund the ten sites). Community mental health centers (or providers identified by the county as providing services instead of a community mental health center), a county or city, or any other public/private provider who is approved by the Department of Human Services may apply for grants. The services system must at a minimum: be regional (serve more than one county); coordinate with other providers in the area, the county central point of coordination (CPC), community-based corrections, the courts, and law enforcement; include basic services such as face-to-face crisis intervention, stabilization, support, counseling, preadmission screening for persons requiring psychiatric hospitalization, transportation, and follow-up services; and include telephone hotlines, mobile crisis staff, collaboration protocols, follow-up with community services, information systems, and competency-based training. FISCAL IMPACT: \$6 million request for up to 10 state block grants of \$600,000 each. *Status: Senate Floor/House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Bolkcom (Floor Manager); Rep. Wessel-Kroeschell (Floor Manager)*

SF 2188 - Time Off for Caucus - Allows a person to take unpaid time off from work to attend a presidential precinct caucus for up to four hours beginning one hour prior to the start of the precinct caucus. The bill contains several details of how a person would go about requesting their time off. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Danielson (Floor Manager)*

SF 2259 - ICF/MR & ICF/MI Employee Tuition Assistance - Establishes a pilot tuition assistance program

at North Iowa Area Community College for students who are Iowa residents and work at an Intermediate Care Facility for Mental Illness or Mental Retardation. *Status: Senate Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Not yet assigned*

SF 2262 - Family Support Subsidy - The family support subsidy program assists families with a family member who is younger than 18 and has an educational or developmental disability, or has special health care needs. Under this bill, families with one child receiving the family support subsidy will receive 50% of the subsidy for any additional children (so they receive 100% of the subsidy for the first child, but only 50% of the subsidy for each additional child). If the subsidy for the first child is ended, the second child's subsidy is bumped up to 100%. Allows DHS to withhold family support subsidy payments to a family who is appealing a decision to end the subsidy for a child turning 18, but the withholding must end when the appeal is resolved. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Schmitz (Chair)*

SF 2279 - Healthy Kids Act - Requires school meals and food/drinks sold at school be healthy, requires every physically able child be physically active for 30 minutes every school day, and requires all students complete a course in CPR before graduating. Requires licensed dietitians in the schools to support the inclusion of these guidelines in the individual education plans for children requiring special education. Fiscal Impact: Annual costs to Area Education Agencies is between \$34,000 - \$244,000. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Appel (Floor Manager)*

SF 2286 - Federal Block Grant Bill - Spends federal funds coming to the state for various purposes. Includes \$3,631,173 to community mental health centers and \$7,609,836 for MH/MR/DD/BI community service (local purchase of service). *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Hatch (Floor Manager)*

SF 2306 - Long Term Health Insurance - Establishes a Consumer Advocate Bureau in the Insurance Commissioner's Office to make sure people are treated fairly by insurance companies. Adds \$60,000 for a Senior Health Insurance Information Program to disseminate educational information and raise public awareness on insurance product choices designed to meet the needs of older Iowans. Includes new definitions and requirements for long-term care policies. The two study bills are the same, but do not include the establishment of a Consumer Advocate Bureau. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Heckroth (Floor Manager)*

SF 2312 - Elections/Voter Registration - Requires all polling places be accessible to persons with disabilities and requires all polling places have voting equipment for use by voters with disabilities in counties where paper ballots are

not used. Prohibits the use of cell phones, cameras, pagers, and other electronic communications while voting. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Appel (Floor Manager)*

SF 2334 & HSB 745 Medicaid Recovery from Insurance - Medicaid is the "payer of last resort," which means it will only pay for services if the person has no other way to pay for it. If a person has insurance, but the insurance company refuses to pay for the service because the person qualifies for Medicaid, Medicaid is required by Federal law to bill that insurance company. This bill enforces this law, and requires insurance companies to give Medicaid a list of the people they insure. This list will be used to determine if person has some other way to pay for services (the person will continue to receive services, the only difference is that DHS will go after the insurance company to recover the costs of providing those services). Requires Medicaid to present claims within three years of service, or within six years of the state bringing suit. House bill will get a new "house file" number soon. *Status: Senate Floor/House Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Wood (Floor Manager); Rep. Abdul-Samad (Floor Manager)*

SSB 3140 - Health Care Reform (Senate Version) - Will be assigned a new bill number soon. COVERING KIDS: Mandates coverage for all kids by January 1, 2011, if funds become available, by covering more kids under hawk-iUses Iowa Comprehensive Health Insurance Association (Insurance Division). Subsidizes private coverage for non hawk-i eligible children up to 19 years up to 300 % FPL on sliding-scale. COVERING ADULTS: Goal of providing unsubsidized coverage for low-income adults with family income up to 400 % FPL. CONTINUED DEPENDENT COVERAGE: Up to 25 years of age on parent's insurance if full time student. MEDICAL HOME: Establishes patient-centered medical home in a primary care setting and a Medical Home Commission to implement a statewide medical home system (IDPH)Changes date for implementation of the dental home initiative to December 31, 2010 and clarifies that EPSDT services are required. ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS: Establishes an Iowa Electronic Health Information Commission to promote use of electronic health information technology. CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT: Establishes Prevention and Chronic Care Management Advisory Council to develop a state initiative for chronic care management (IDPH), and a Clinicians Advisory Panel. LONG TERM CARE PLANNING: Long-term care public education and awareness campaign, End-of-Life Pilot Project (Linn County), and Advisory Committee. COST CONTAINMENT: Establishes a new office of Health Care Quality, Cost Containment, and Consumer Information. TRANSPARENCY: Establishes Bureau of Health Insurance Oversight and establishes health care transparency reporting requirements. Adds to the duties of the Bureau of Health Care Access to develop a Statewide Health Care Delivery Infrastructure and Resources Strategic Plan, including elements that could impact the Certificate of Need program. CERTIFICATE OF NEED: Expands Health

Facilities Council from 5 to 7 members. Adds health economist and actuary. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Hatch (Floor Manager)*

SSB 3186 - Health Care Workforce - Getting mental health and health care in rural areas of the state can be difficult because there are simply not enough providers in some areas of the state. This bill is trying to address this shortage by encouraging people to practice in rural and underserved areas of the state by creating a loan forgiveness program, a psychiatrist residency program, tax credits for shortage professions, and increased use of telemedicine. Also requires 65% of any increased nursing home reimbursement go to direct care workers. Establishes a Direct Care Worker Advisory Council to recommend ways to credential direct care workers (recommendations due 11/30/2008). Establishes a new pilot program to give tuition assistance to people who are working in facilities that serve persons with disabilities. Tuitions can be used at a local community college while they are working in the facility. *Status: Senate Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Dotzler (Chair), Hatch & Seymour*

SSB 3229 - Child Welfare Services Provider Reimbursements - Increases the reimbursement for child welfare service providers annually at the same percentage rate as the school allowed growth rate. Includes shelter, remedial services, HCBS children's mental health waiver, and court-ordered services (under chapter 232). New bill number will be available soon. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Kreiman (Floor Manager)*

SSB 3262 - Optical Scan Voting - Requires counties use accessible voting systems that are proven as reliable and have a paper record (optical scan voting systems that use electronic ballot marking devices that are ADA compatible). Gives counties \$4.9 million to help pay for these systems. Applies to elections starting November 4, 2008. Effective upon enactment. *Status: Senate Floor; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Danielson (Floor Manager)*

SSB 3264 & HSB 775 Administration & Regulation Budget - Keeps funding the same for the next fiscal year (which begins on July 1, 2008) for the Department of Human Rights' Deaf Services Division (\$413,700) and Persons with Disabilities Division (\$206,221). *Status: Senate Appropriations Committee/House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Danielson (Chair), Dvorsky, McCoy, Hahn & Kettering; Rep. Hunter (Chair), Oldson & Alons*

SSB 3265 & HSB 774 Transportation Budget - To change in spending for transportation in next year's budget (which begins July 1, 2008), including the same level of spending on ADA improvements (\$120,000). *Status: Senate Appropriations Committee/House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. McCoy (Chair),*

Warnstadt, Dvorsky, Putney & Kettering; Rep. Cohoon (Chair), Oldson & Huseman

SSB 3270 & HSB 773 Justice Systems Budget - This budget funds Iowa's correctional system, as well as public safety programs and homeland security. It also gives money to pay for legal services to persons in poverty (\$2 million), the Office of the Consumer Advocate (\$3.1 million) who helps provide consumer protection services, and the Civil Rights Commission (\$1.5 million) which gives people whose civil rights have been violated a place to be heard. All of these spending levels are the same as last year - no increase, but no decrease either. *Status: Senate Appropriations Committee/House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Sen. Hancock (Chair), Dvorsky, Fraise, Angelo & Kettering; Rep. T. Taylor (Chair), Oldson & Lukan*

Resolutions

HR 10 - Lead Paint Interim - Asks for a study committee over the summer to look at how to fund the removal of lead paint from homes. Lead paint is very toxic to children and is a preventable cause of behavioral and developmental disabilities and mental retardation. Children under the age of six are most at risk. Legislators would study the problem over the summer and fall, and make recommendations to be considered in the 2009 legislative session. *Status: House Administration & Rules Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Not yet assigned*

SR 101 & HR 103 Employment of Persons with Disabilities - States that it is a priority of the Legislature to make sure there is a stable and quality direct-support workforce for individuals with disabilities. This resolutions makes the following statements: There are more than 115,000 Iowans with developmental disabilities, many of whom depend on the support of their families, communities, providers, and caregivers. Turn-over rates of direct-support workers are 40-75% and high job vacancy rates make it difficult for providers to ensure quality care. Iowans with disabilities that wish to work and live in their own homes, in their own communities, need a reliable and quality support system. *Status: Senate Rules & Administration Committee/House Administration & Rules Committee; Subcommittee/Floor Manager: Not yet assigned*

DEAD BILLS

The following bills did not make it through the first funnel deadline and are now dead (no longer eligible for consideration by the Legislature). You can view the more detail on these bills online at: www.infonetiowa.com/current_issue/dead_bills.php.

HF 2014 - Psychiatry Shortage
HF 2031 - Teacher Training/Autism
HF 2056 & HF 2274 - Personal Needs Allowance
HF 2115 - Cost-Based Reimbursement/Elderly Waiver
HF 2178 - Long Term Care Insurance Standards
HF 2182 - Mental Health Advocate Appointments
HF 2222 - Hospitalization of a Minor with Mental Illness
HF 2225 - Disabled Veteran Vehicle Registration
HF 2236 - Long Term Health Insurance
HF 2251 - Mental Health Patient Advocates
HF 2252 - Optical Scan Voting
HF 2254 - Medicaid Copayments
HF 2259 - IowaCare Re-Enrollment
HF 2285 & HF 2285 - Health Care Workforce
HF 2288 - Minority Impact Statements
HF 2301 - Health Information Technology
HF 2319 - Lead Paint Testing/Child Care Homes
HF 2324 - Information Technology Devices/Visual Impairment
HF 2339 - Special Education/Male Student Story
HF 2377 - Employment Support for Persons with Mental Illness or Mental Retardation
HF 70 - ADA Review/State Buildings
HF 791 - Prosthetic Device Insurance Coverage
HSB 564 - Mental Health & Substance Abuse Parity
HSB 626 - Antiepileptic Drug Substitutions
HSB 627 - Elections/Voter Registration
HSB 636 - Health Care for All (Universal Health Care)
HSB 639 - Family Support Subsidy
HSB 720 - Audiology Coverage Insurance Requirement

HSB 731 - Child Welfare Services Provider Reimbursements
HSB 750 - Involuntary Commitment Interim
HSB 755 - Insurance Consumer Advocate
SF 2030 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Study
SF 2047 & HF 2117 - Personal Needs Allowance
SF 2056 - Automatic Absentee Ballot
SF 2128 - Therapeutic Recreation Board
SF 2242 - Insurance Consumer Advocate
SSB 3027 - Public Accommodations/Jail & Prison
SSB 3071 - Education Technical Changes/Special Education
SSB 3093 & HSB 620 - FBI Gun Checks/Persons Adjudicated Mentally Ill
SSB 3093 & HSB 592 - Whistleblower Complaints
SSB 3122 & HSB 667 - Children Adjudicated Mentally Ill
SSB 3153 - Background Checks/Employees of Care Facilities
SSB 3194 - Governor's Health Care Reform Package
HJR 2004 - Tobacco Taxes for Health Care/Constitutional Amendment

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